

Arkansas Centerline File Program is a Success among Cities and Counties

The Arkansas Centerline File (ACF) Program, which started in 2002, has begun to reap great rewards. The ACF program is designed to compile a statewide road centerline file with a horizontal accuracy greater than ten meters and geocodable attributes.

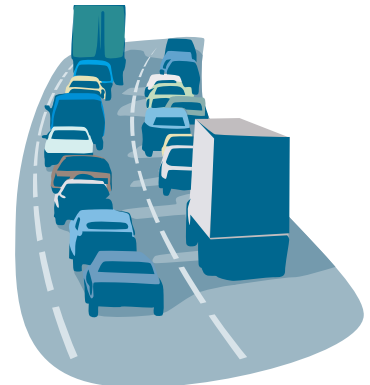
Presently, the best available statewide centerline file, which exists in the public domain, was created by the United States Bureau of the Census. A number of entities expressed interest in enhancing and updating the centerline spatial data layer in Arkansas. The Arkansas Geographic Information Office (AGIO) hosted numerous planning meetings to determine the extent of interest in an Arkansas Centerline File program. An ACF Standard was developed by the AGIO and adopted by the Arkansas State Land Information Board (ASLIB) for each entity to follow while developing centerline data.

The ACF program is intended to benefit the Arkansas Geographic Information Systems (GIS) user communities in areas such as E-911 applications, routing services, location-based services, homeland security, and various government entities. The goal of the ACF program is intended to make centerline (road) files more uniform and horizontally accurate.

On March 4, 2003, the AGIO received from Russell Gibson (City of Ft. Smith) the first file that met the ACF standards of +/- 10-meter accuracy and the attribute table format without any effort from the AGIO. Hope, Russellville, Fayetteville, Jonesboro, and Bentonville have also submitted files.

Drew and Clark counties are the first two counties to issue requests for bids for GIS road mapping that require the contractor to use the ACF standard. These requests state that the contractors who respond with a bid to the county must demonstrate adherence to the official ACF state rules and regulations by having documentation from the AGIO.

Vince Guillet, GIS Specialist for AGIO and ACF Theme Lead, comments, "I think the most significant aspect of the ACF Program is that by working directly with the local county judge/OEM/9-1-1/Road & Bridge or combination we are leaving in place a mechanism to keep the data current and as accurate as possible; as opposed to the alternative of paying a contractor to map a 'snap shot' in time of the whole state with no real strategy for keeping the data maintained. This aspect of the program allows me to get involved on a personal level with people who create and utilize this technology as an everyday function of their job. I get to see first hand how GIS helps provide better service to the people of Arkansas. It makes my job a whole lot more satisfying this way, even though paying to have the whole state mapped at once would be much easier."



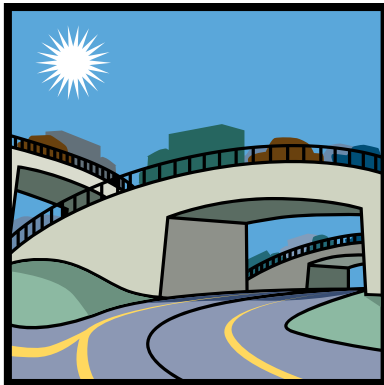
Private contractors have also gotten involved in the ACF program and are playing a significant role in building high quality data. M&M GIS, Inc. and the AGIO have held several meetings. As a result, the AGIO is pleased to announce that M&M GIS is one of four contractors to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stating they will follow the ACF and GPS standards set forth by the ASLIB while doing GIS road mapping in Arkansas. M&M GIS is contracted with Hot Spring, Garland, Montgomery, and Pike counties. The 911 Company, Inc., NTB Associates, Inc., and Spatial Data Research, Inc. also signed MOUs stating they would follow the standards. Paul Stricklin, owner of The 911 Company, Inc. states, "The 911 Company, Inc. sees the Arkansas Geographic Office and the ACF Program as another important State partnership with corporations and local government concerned with the provision of Enhanced 9-1-1 Service to all citizens."

NTB Associates, Inc. felt that cooperation in this program was an easy decision. “The reason NTBA became involved as a vendor in the ACF program is because we see the need for a consistent, accurate centerline layer throughout the country. The best way to accomplish this is through the establishment of standards and the implementation of those standards at local levels,” states Brad Daugherty, GIS Specialist of NTB Associates, Inc.

Susan Cromwell, Chair of the Arkansas State Land Information Board, is pleased by the involvement of the private contractors with the ACF program. She comments, “What we’ve been able to accomplish with this program is to set up a model whereby the counties, the Board and the AGIO have created pressure that sends a strong signal to anyone developing centerline data that it must be compliant with the standard. The most interesting thing about this program that we’ve seen thus far is that it seems to actually be creating more market for the vendors. Complying with the standard will ensure their product’s compatibility with the statewide GIS efforts. This program provides the bowl of cream for herding those cats.”

The success of the ACF program continues to grow each day. This program is so important that the AGIO has one full-time staff person dedicated 100% to the effort and has leveraged staff resources from the Department of Health as well. Regarding the progress of the counties, Madison and Jefferson are now in the ACF stan-

dard; 9 counties are finishing with renaming their attribute columns, changing the road name and road type, and adjusting spatial accuracies in the database format to meet the standard; 12 counties have either contractors or planning and development districts (PDDs) working on their road mapping—the deliverables will meet the standard with Drew and Clark out to bid; 15 counties are working internally to develop and adjust their files to meet the standard; while the rest have been made aware of the standard. The progress of the cities includes files submitted by Bentonville, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Hope, Jonesboro, and Russellville.



Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) has been an extremely helpful resource with their highly accurate road map files for Searcy and Newton counties, with many others to come. AHTD is directly coordinating with the AGIO on the ACF program in an effort to assist counties in developing consistent publicly available, high quality road

mapping by sharing resources, thereby reducing duplication of effort.

Arkansas One Call has provided numerous personnel hours of input for the development of the ACF standard, assisting with data that might have been missed had they not been present. They have put much work into the program, inputting raw labor to complete the most difficult tasks as well as providing high-level, hands-on practical experience with geocoding and GIS road mapping development.

Shelby Johnson, State Geographic Information Coordinator is excited about the progress of the ACF Program. “When we initially studied this program, we looked at similar programs in New Mexico, Kentucky and Virginia. Each of these states had poured a considerable amount of funding resources to get road centerline data developed in their state. We looked at our situation in Arkansas and realized instantly that if we were going to move this program forward it would take more coordination than we’d ever pulled off, because we simply did not have big funding resources. But everyone on the Centerlines I-Team agreed that this data is a problem, it needs to be fixed and we’re willing to work together to get it done. After that, we took the standard modeled by the Centerline I-Team to the Land Information Board and they moved it forward through the formal standards promulgation process. From there, this program has picked up momentum and been rolling downhill ever since. I like to think it’s partly due to the spirit of Arkansans. We all just seem to pull together when important data files need to be built.”

If you are interested in becoming involved with the ACF program, please contact Vince Guillet, GIS Specialist with the Arkansas Geographic Information Office, at 501-682-2943. Vince can also be reached via e-mail at vince.guillet@mail.state.ar.us. Please visit www.gis.state.ar.us for more information concerning centerlines and other AGIO projects.
